DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 218 835 EC 142 795

AUTHOR Sapon-Shevin, Mara
TITLE Mainstreaming the Handicapped, Segregating the Gifted: Theoretical and Pragmatic Concerns.
PUB DATE Mar 82
NOTE 35p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (New York, NY, March 19-23, 1982).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Educational Needs; *Educational Philosophy; *Gifted; History; Mainstreaming; *Mental Retardation; Social Attitudes; *Special Classes; *Student Placement; Teacher Qualifications

ABSTRACT

The paper traces the apparently conflicting trends toward elimination of special classes for handicapped students (mainstreaming) and the movement toward special programs for gifted and talented students. Issues related to identification and labeling are examined, and the importance of flexible definitions for both retardation and giftedness is cited. Similarities in espoused rationales for providing services to both groups are discussed, the debate over special vs. regular class placement is reviewed, and assumptions underlying gifted advocates' stress on segregated programing are examined. Controversies over qualifications and characteristics of teachers of both groups are also addressed. The author asserts that the ways in which retardation and giftedness are conceptualized will have a major effect on society's views and educational practices. Common concerns for both populations are voiced, including provision of token services, the need for truly differentiated services and for a continuum of services. Assumptions underlying gifted education must be thoroughly examined, the author emphasizes, before the gifted education movement can be used as a lever to address deficiencies in all areas of education, promote individualization, and value diversity. (CL)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED218835

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

MAINSTREAMING THE HANDICAPPED, SEGREGATING THE GIFTED:

THEORETICAL AND PRAGMATIC CONCERNS

Mara Sapon-Shevin
Department of Specialized Instructional Programs
Cleveland State University

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Mara Sapon-Shevin

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Presented at the 1982 A.E.R.A. Annual Meeting, March 20, 1982, New York City.

EC143795

The handicapped education movement and the movement in support of education for children labeled as gifted have both grown more powerful and more visible in recent years. To this point, however, the two movements have been relatively discrete and occasionally antagonistic. What is the history of both forces and how they have evolved into competing rather than complementary trends in public education?

Public Law 94-142, The Education of All Handicapped Children Act, became law in 1975 and went into effect in the Fall of 1978. The law specifies that to the maximum extent appropriate, handicapped children should be educated in the least restrictive environment, with their non-handicapped peers. The commonly used term "mainstreaming," while not mentioned in the law, has come to refer to efforts to integrate handicapped and non-handicapped children. The movement toward mainstreaming had its roots in educational research (Dunn 1968), litigation (P.A.R.C., Mills, etc.) and extensive parental pressure. The passage of P.L. 94-142 represented public policy based on philosophical and educational arguments for a guaranteed education for all handicapped children in settings which are no more restrictive or segregated than is required by educational imperatives.

The movment towards more appropriate education of students identified as gifted has followed a different course. This group of children, largely ignored by the American public, came into the public eye in the late 1940's when Terman's historical study of gifted children was published (Terman and Oden 1947). An increasing interest in this population was occasioned by the Russian launch of Sputnik in 1957. The realization that the United States was no longer first technologically led to intense interest in the education and the development of

gifted children, focussing on their potential as future scientists. Interest in the gifted declined again during the 1960's, but has drawn renewed attention beginning in 1971 with the publication of "The Marland Report," a report to the Congress of the United States by the U.S. Commission of Education (Marland 1971).

The mainstreaming and education for the gifted movements, however, have had little overlap or shared dialogue. Services for gifted children are not included in P.L. 94-142 and although several states (Pennsylvania, Idaho, Florida, and North Carolina) do require Individual Educational Plans for students identified as gifted as well as those identified as handicapped, this represents the exception and not the rule. Teacher education programs for the two populations are discrete; school programs are often administered from different offices; and parent groups (although strong in both areas) do not intersect.

There are, however, strong arguments to be made for examining similarities among and differences between these two educational thrusts, in order to identify the compatibilities and conflicts which exist both philosophically and in implementation. First, there are numerous concerns shared by the two movements which suggest the utility of a shared analysis. Who are the gifted, or the retarded, and how are they identified? What is the rationale for providing services for either population? What are the forces which mitigate against the provision of appropriate service? How are children of either group best served by the schools? (Segregated vs. integrated programs?) Who are the best teachers for these students? Research attempts to answer these questions for the two populations have been largely discrete, and yet there are areas of overlap and of conflict.

Secondly, the two populations are often viewed as competing for school resources and funds, a conflict likely to be exaggerated by current fiscal pressures.

An examination of the underlying issues involved would help to focus on the following questions:

1. Why are such programs seen as competing? (Are there philosophical incompatibilities as well as economic ones?)

2. Are there any grounds for future cooperation among advocates for both groups?

A final reason for examining and comparing programs for the gifted and programs for the retarded is the relative richness of research, theory and philosophical arguments concerning the segregation and integration of retarded learners and the comparative lack thereof in the area of gifted education. Advocates of gifted education have rarely drawn on the research base of special education and yet such comparison could prove illuminating.

Although the handicapped education movement has addressed itself to all different kinds of handicaps (sensory as well as intellectual), for the purposes of this paper, comparisons will be drawn with research pertaining to the education of students identified as "retarded" as this represents an intellectual deficit in the same way that giftedness represents an intellectual "gift" and thus presents the closest parallel.

The purpose of this paper is three-fold:

1. To compare and contrast rationales for the education of gifted students and the education of retarded students with particular attention to issues of segregation and integration;

2. To examine how our conceptualizations of giftedness and retardation affect our analysis of the issues; and

3. To elaborate a set of implications for practice and research.

There are four major areas of concern which are shared by both the advocates for education of handicapped and advocates of gifted education. They are:

1. How are children identified and labeled?
2. What arguments are raised in support for appropriate education and to combat forces which interfere with the provision of services to this population?
3. How can schools best serve children who have been so identified; are integrated or segregated services preferable?
4. Who are the best teachers for these students and how can they be selected or trained?

Problems of Identification and Labeling

There has been considerable discussion, research, and litigation (Hobbs 1975; Mercer 1973; Larry P. v Riles 1972) surrounding how students are identified and labeled as "retarded." Over-reliance (or exclusive reliance) on IQ testing to determine retardation without reference to adaptive behaviors, cultural differences or differences in language background have been criticized repeatedly. The over-representation of minority group members in classes for the retarded has been cited as evidence of the failings of current methods of testing and evaluation (Mercer 1973). There has also been considerable discussion concerning the ways in which gifted students are identified and labeled (Getzels and Jackson 1958; Renzulli 1978; Feldman 1979). Problems with over-reliance on IQ test scores to determine giftedness, failure to take into account creativity and other divergent thinking skills, and narrow definitions which stress only academic achievement (as opposed to social, musical, artistic or other achievement) have all been cited as problems in this area. The under-representation of minority students and the proportionate over-representation of upper-middle-class white students have been cited as failures of testing and evaluation.

The reification of the concept of intelligence as something other than that which is measured by an IQ test is clearly a problem in both areas. There is the recognition in both areas that an IQ test score represents only a fraction of a person's overall performance and not necessarily even that which is more related to achievement.

Renzulli (1978) states that definitions of giftedness can be viewed along a continuum of "conservative to liberal" according to the degree of restrictiveness used in determining who is eligible for special programs and services. He states that definitions of giftedness can be restrictive in two ways: by limiting the number of performance areas considered in determining eligibility and by specifying a degree or level which must be attained to be considered "gifted." He criticizes "liberal" definitions for introducing values questions (what area is considered valuable for consideration) and because of their relative subjectivity. Renzulli identified a cluster of three traits, all of which he feels must be present to identify a person as "gifted":

1. above average ability;
2. creativity; and
3. task commitment.

In some ways, however, Renzulli's definition is more restrictive than ones based solely on IQ, in that it would not include the under-achieving gifted students, who perhaps lack task commitment due to the type of tasks which he/she has been engaged. Additionally, the differences between creativity and intelligence have been debated endlessly, but many would argue (Dellas and Galer 1970; MacKinnon 1962) that while related, the two are not always present in the same individual.

There are clear differences in the goals of identifying children as gifted or retarded. Since the label of "retardation" is stigmatizing and deviance creating and providing services costly, the goal is generally to identify only those students truly in need of specialized services (the smallest number possible). Therefore, multi-factored definitions are favored (low IQ and deficits in adaptive behavior) in order to reduce the number of identified students and to insure that children have not been erroneously or capriciously labeled.

Unlike being labeled as "retarded" however, acquiring the label of "gifted" is status-increasing rather than stigmatizing. There is clear disagreement, however, concerning the importance of being highly selective in identifying students as gifted. Unidimensional definitions of giftedness (for example, IQ only) are considered by some to be elitist and exclusionary and it is argued that such definitions ignore other areas of possible excellence. But since the provision of specialized services is costly in this area as well, there is still an underlying thrust to separate the truly "gifted" from those who are simply "above average," and some have criticized broader definitions of giftedness as failing to be adequately specific or discriminatory. Multi-factored assessment of the gifted generally means displaying exceptional skill in any one of a number of areas, and with the exception of Renzulli's definition (1978) which demands high performance in three areas simultaneously, the goal of a multi-dimensional approach is usually to identify as <u>many</u> "gifted" students as possible. Yet those who would use a truly multi-dimensional selection procedure are likely to be challenged by those who say that <u>too</u> many children will be identified (too many according to whom? too many for what purpose?). Feldman (1979) argues in an article entitled,

"Toward a Nonelitist Conception of Giftedness," that in order to generate support for gifted education, giftedness must be conceived in nonelitist terms, a direction which he sees as embodying the acceptance of two propositions:

1. All children are gifted (if our definitions are broad enough); and

2. The purpose of education is to promote excellence in as many forms as possible.

In both instances, however, the problem is linked to two sources: economics and inflexible school programs. Specialized instructional resources in schools are scarce, and therefore the need to identify the "right" children is intensified. If the teacher of the gifted or the retarded can only work with 15 children per year, teachers feel compelled to identify those children who are most needful or most deserving. This issue is further intensified by many school systems' identification of gifted children as "the top 3-5%" (rather than according to some set of criterion), thus guaranteeing that competition for those places will be intense. Similarly, teachers in public schools often report that they have been requested (off the record, of course) to not refer any more children who might be retarded for testing or services because the district does not have the monetary or manpower resources to accommodate any more children in special programs.

The identification of children as gifted or retarded is often complicated by the rigid administrative structures of our schools. Due to federal regulations, for example, a teacher of the retarded may only work with children who have been so labeled and tested, due to restrictions on flow-through funds, certification policies, and so forth. If a child must be labeled as "X" before he can go to the special room and receive the services of the special teacher, then the necessity for formal, rigid identification of children becomes mandatory. More flexible

arrangements in school would remove much of the pressure for characterizing children by one number or one descriptor, and would allow for more flexible teacher/student arrangements.

A common direction in resolving problems of identification and labeling in both areas has been the movement towards viewing intelligence as a developmental rather than a fixed concept. Blatt (1981) and others have espoused a view of retardation which looks at deficits in behavior as specific to certain situations and amenable to intervention and teaching rather than as generalized personality characteristics. Similarly, the concept of giftedness as "topical and temporal" (Delisle, Reis and Gubbins 1981; Renzulli 1978) rather than as an overall identifying feature is consistent with this movement. As definitions of both retardation and giftedness become less rigid, it will become possible for school programming to be more flexible as well.

Rationale for Providing Services

Arguments of social justice and the need to provide an appropriate education for all children are raised by advocates of both handicapped and gifted education. The neglect of handicapped children has been more evident and dramatic since it lead to their virtual exclusion from education of any kind. Advocates of gifted education argue however, that gifted and talented students, like retarded students, are disadvantaged and handicapped in the usual school situations by services based only on their chronological age, rather than their mental age (Marland 1971). Patterns of underachievement and poor adjustment are often cited as evidence of the failure of schools to meet the needs of gifted students.

Economic issues are raised in both instances to support the need for increased/improved education. It is argued that a more appropriate education for handicapped students will result in making them more productive citizens, less likely to require custodial care and/or governmental monetary support. Ward (1975) argues, "It is mandatory to provide differentially for youth of substantially deviant intellectual potential, and this at extraordinary cost proportionate to the economic strength of the system in order to give these youngsters their fair share of educational opportunity." (p. 71)

Advocates of gifted education argue the need to cultivate and nourish future leaders and problem solvers who will keep our country thriving. Tannenbaum (1972) in tracing the rise and fall of interest in gifted education, sees a clear competition between the pursuit of excellence (concentrating resources on the academically advantaged) and a focus on egalitarianism (concentrating resources on the disadvantaged). "By leaning too far in the direction of excellence, the country is in danger of creating a special kind of elitism out of meritocracy; by leaning heavily in the direction of equality, it easily loses sight of real human differences and ignores outstanding potential rather than offering special privileges for its cultivation." (p. 17)

In detailing the cyclical interest in programming for the gifted, he cites the 1954 desegregation decisions (which were significant antecedents to P.L. 94-142) as diverting attention from the gifted and simultaneously leading to a questioning of IQ testing and of homogeneous grouping of gifted children (leading to de facto exclusion of minority students). Tannenbaum (1972) and Gardner (1961) both refer to the conflicts between addressing internal stress (egalitarianism) and addressing external stress ("keeping America first"):

> "Extreme emphasis on competitive performance in an organization of society leads to one kind of vulnerability. Extreme equalitarianism leads to another kind. The former produces consequences which are threatening to so many people within an organization (or society) that there arise powerful internal forces to combat the emphasis. On the other hand, in an organization or society characterized by extreme equalitarianism the greatest threat lies in external competition, i.e. from aggressive organizations or societies which have not fettered their most talented and energetic people." (Gardner 1961, pp. 24-25)

Gardner feels that this tension between emphasis on individual performance and restraints on individual performance will never and should never be resolved. (p. 28) There is recognition by some, however, that viewing programs for the gifted and programs for the retarded as somehow incompatible or mutually exclusive is ultimately dysfunctional for both groups. Fox (1979) states:

> "Given the financial and political realities of today it is probably more practical to provide for students of all ability levels by focussing on more flexibility in existing schools than to advocate special schools for the gifted." (p. 111)

Tannenbaum proposes the creation of a Bureau of Exceptional Persons which would include both groups. "The public may never feel equally sympathetic to both groups but it could be forced to reduce some of its favoritism toward one over the other if they are combined rather than separate recipients of support through legislation." (Tannenbaum 1979, p. 23)

Philosophically, there is nothing fundamentally incompatible with providing appropriate education for both groups. Much of the supposed incompatibility between serving the two groups is more accurately a reflection of the tensions which result from competition for limited resources. Unfortunately, such internal competition tends to divert attention from underlying questions: How is education funded? Why are there such limited resources? Who benefits from the perpetuation of such competition among subgroups?

Advocates of programs for the gifted and programs for the handicapped cite similar obstacles to full implementation of adequate programs. Societal disinterest (and even hostility towards) the labeled group of youngsters is often seen as a major impediment. Regarding the gifted, Tannenbaum (1972) states:

> "Special provisions for the gifted are primarily luxuries rather than necessities in the educational enterprise... despite repeated distinctions educators make between equality and sameness of educational opportunity, the gifted get their fair share of stimulation at school only when there is enough money to pay the bill and their cause is supported by public figures whose opinions command attention. In fact, a school's failure to challenge able pupils to the limit of their abilities could hardly stir up the general indignation or legal action that would result if the victimized children had some kind of learning handicaps." (pp. 14-15)

It is only fairly recently, however, that neglect of handicapped children has stirred up "general indignation" or legal actions, and it is increasingly clear that a substantial backlash movement may soon erase the progress which has been made. It is unclear how long the public will support what often amounts to a major commitment of funds to services for a small segment of the population.

Tannenbaum (1972) laments that "gifted children were considered ornaments to be detached and discarded when the cost of upkeep became prohibitive." (p. 16) While a "social justice" theory is likely to be more supportive of the "have-nots," those who would base services on a cost/benefit ratio (cost of education to benefits to society) would more likely support channeling funds to gifted students. In any case, there is no guarantee that the education of the handicapped will not also soon be seen as a frill that cannot be economically defended.

How Are The Retarded/Gifted Best Educated?

The most significant debate concerning the education of students labeled as retarded or gifted centers on what constitutes the most appropriate/desirable placement and programming for students so identified. Although considerable discussion is devoted in both areas to discussions of curriculum materials, type of instruction, and programmatic focus, the key question concerns whether or not educational services should be offered in homogeneous or heterogeneous groups. The argument over ability grouping is a complex one, and one in which it is often difficult to separate heated opinion from empirical research base. Such a separation, however, is not only difficult, but perhaps also undesirable; efforts to "get to the bottom of the ability grouping conflict" must inevitably include attention to ethical and philosophical concerns, and must avoid oversimplification of a multidimensional issue.

There are two major reasons for which any sub-population is separated from a larger group: for the benefit (or supposed benefit) of the separated population, and for the benefit (or supposed benefit) of the majority from whom the population has been separated. One of the major differences between the typical practice of separating retarded students and those models which advocate separating gifted students rests on the extent to which they draw support from one or the other of the benefits arguments cited above.

The separation of retarded students has been justified according to both arguments - that it would result in improved education for retarded students and that it would decrease the heterogeneity of the regular classroom, thereby rendering it more "teachable." Both of these arguments have now been seriously questioned.

Dunn (1968) in what has become an historical article, questioned if special education for the mildly retarded was justified in any way. He indicated the homogeneous grouping of retarded students on the grounds that it constitutes a form of tracking, and is thus discriminatory. He stated, "Homogeneous groupings tend to work to the disadvantage of the slow learners and underprivileged." (p. 8) Dunn also questioned the efficacy of special class placement for retarded students. He cited the finding of Johnson (1962):

> "It is indeed paradoxical the mentally handicapped children having teachers especially trained, having more money (per capita) spent on their education and being designed to provide for their unique needs, should be accomplishing the objective of their education at the same or at a lower level than similar mentally handicapped children who have not had these advantages and have been forced to remain in the regular grades." (p. 66)

Dunn's assumption, that mentally retarded children do not do better in separate classes, is supported by current data (Gottlieb 1981). Gottlieb's review of the relevant literature found that mentally retarded children do equally poorly in both separate classes and regular classes. (p. 118) Gottlieb did not find that stigma was eliminated by regular class placement, and summarizes by saying that mainstream programs per se do not result in improved social status for EMR children. (p. 119) Although there is lack of unanimity regarding the special class placement of retarded students, the movement away from segregated special class placements remains strong.

Regarding the second assumed benefity of ability grouping, that it renders groups more teachable or manageable, it is interesting to note that while teachers usually support the concept of ability groupings, few of their assumptions are supported by research. In a study by Wilson and Schmits (1978) they report that 92% of the teachers surveyed found grouping for instruction instructionally

effective, 77% reported that they found it easier to teach the low-achieving students in homogeneous groups, and 74% thought that students in the low group were less discouraged in homogeneous groups. Wilson and Schmits (1978) go on to contrast teachers' views with research data from which they conclude that "Recent reviews of this research acknowledge that conclusions conflict, but agree that the evidence cannot be used to support the assumption that ability grouping aids achievement." (p. 536) They also cite Esposito's (1973) study in which he found that "desirable attitudes and self-concepts of children of low ability may be seriously impaired as a result of ability grouping while the self-esteem of high ability children tends to be artificially inflated."

Arguments in support of segregated programs for gifted students rest largely on arguments of benefits to the gifted students themselves. In contrast to the retarded, for whom arguments that "they need to be with their own kind" are strenuously rejected (Wolfensberger 1972), it is often argued that gifted students need to be with one another. Little, if any, attention is devoted to the issues of consequences to members of the "regular" classroom resulting from the removal of gifted students.

Among the advocates of education for the gifted, several are strong defenders of ability grouping. Ward (1975) states:

> "Only through ability grouping can the gifted student engage in stimulating discourse-discussion and debate with his intellectual peers. This needed high level engagement of like minds cannot be carried on effectively or efficiently in the typically heterogeneous classroom." (p. 296)

This type of argument in favor of segregated programs for the gifted encapsulates the argument that gifted students need to be together, not only because of

differentiated programming but because there is something valuable in being with like individuals. Ward (1975) goes on to state:

> "Everywhere the salutary effects of ability grouping upon motivation, achievement, and morale of able students is readily noticeable. There is little evidence in the experience of these school systems to substantiate the fears of those who believe that snobbishness and 'elitism' are the inevitable by-products of ability grouping." (p. 298)

Support of the notion of segregated programming for gifted students rests on several basic assumptions concerning "typical" students. First is the notion that there is in fact such thing as the "average" student who can be clearly distinguished from the "gifted" student. The second assumption is that the education provided in the regular classroom is appropriate for the average student and inappropriate for the gifted student. Ward (1975) describes the need of gifted students for opportunities and programs "beyond the reach of and not appropriate to the capacities and needs of persons not exceptionally endowed with potential for learning and productive or creative behavior." (p. 65)

Carroll (cited in Barbe 1965) states that, "To force upon all an education planned for average children, regardless of intellectual capacity, is to grant special privilege to the central group and to deny to the bright and the dull their rights." (p. 429)

Clearly, this type of discussion tends to reify the conception of "averageness" as though it in fact represented a type of student, rather than simply a statistical construct.

In response to the question, "Is a good program for the gifted a good program for all children?" the Marland Report (1971) responds:

> "No, gifted children need something special. Other children cannot compete with the highly talented, advanced performer... The program for all children is necessarily adjusted to the norm or average. The result is that those who are markedly different in potential encounter a program of limited significance." (p. 27)

Arguments for segregated programming also rest on two other unquestioned assumptions regarding the regular classroom: the first is that the regular classroom which as it is now conceived (or imagined) to be, is inappropriate, cannot be changed. Ward (1975) states: "Ability grouping makes possible many teaching and learning experiences which cannot be accomplished in the typical classroom." (p. 197)

The other assumption is that the regular classroom is inevitably competitive; this leads to the argument that it is inappropriate for gifted children to be competing in regular classrooms. Extensive recent research has been conducted revolving around the use of heterogeneous, cooperative learning groups for instruction. (Sharan, 1980; Slavin 1980; Johnson and Johnson 1978) These efforts represent by and large successful attempts to increase both the kinds of learning which goes on in typical classrooms and the nature of the cooperative interaction between the students by controlling the size and make-up of the group and by assigning group tasks which require cooperation.

The argument is often heard that in a heterogeneous classroom the gifted are frustrated and bored (Marland 1971). Bereday (1965) responds that "Everyone performs better in an atmosphere of intellectual stimulation and excitement. But the presence of normal though less gifted children does not necessarily mean boredom, nor does the presence of intellectually sharp students remove the danger." (p. 481)

Many of the objections raised to "the regular classroom" as the appropriate placement for gifted children center less on their heterogeneity and more on their boring, unimaginative conceptions of teaching and learning. It is easy to see why some look to ability grouping as a solution but it is a misleading assumption that ability grouping will solve the problems of poor teaching. As Cushenberry and Howell (1974) state:

> "Ability grouping whether carried out vertically, horizontally or in combination is no panacea in itself. If it is believed that once the groupings have been formed learning differences have been met. The scheme actually becomes a negative force in the educative process." (p. 49)

Oliver (cited in Barbe 1965) echoes this feeling, stating that "segregation does not assure the gifted child of a better education. The ultimate need of the gifted child is an enriched program, whether it is in a homogeneous or heterogeneous classroom." (p. 430)

If ability grouping alone, per se, is seen as the solution, less attention is likely to be paid to what goes on in the homogeneously grouped classroom. The fact that even supposedly homogeneous groups are actually heterogeneous is likely to be neglected when ability grouping is utilized. (Cushenberry and Howell 1970) In a critique of segregated programs for the gifted, Bereday (1965) writes:

> "Only in a flexible situation, in a situation in which one can count on physical availability of all types of children, can one adjust the groupings and the programme to the needs of the moment. To impose upon the schools the straightjacket of preconceived, rigid classifications unrelated to the available opportunities and to the nature of the children involved is to satisfy an pedantic mind but not to answer the problem of the neglect of the gifted." (p. 482)

Bereday asks whether heterogeneity is really the culprit in poor teaching. "Are the gifted discouraged because they are forced to take their education by

the side of the less able, or because they are lost in the vast throng of children foisted upon a simple teacher for simultaneous attention?" (p. 480) He goes on to ask if perhaps haphazard heterogeneity might also be the problem and proposes that maybe limited, thoughtful heterogeneity is the solution.

Although the research on the effects of class size on achievement is inconclusive (Glass and Smith 1979), recent work in the area of cooperative instruction is supportive of Bereday's notion that thoughtful, purposive, heterogeneity can be used to facilitate learning for all group members when the size, membership, structure and task of the group are all carefully arranged and monitored.

In a study by Johnson, Skon and Johnson (1980), the effects of interpersonal cooperation, competition and individualistic efforts were compared on tasks involving categorization, retrieval, spatial reason, and verbal problem-solving. On three of the four task measures, students in the cooperation condition outperformed students in the competitive condition; they outperformed students in the individualistic condition on all four task measures. To determine whether the superior performance of the cooperative groups was due to the high ability students giving the answers to the lower ability students, the performance of high ability students were analyzed separately. The results showed that "the high ability students in the cooperative condition consistently performed higher on the problem-solving tasks and used superior strategies for deriving their answers than did the high ability subjects in the competitive and individualistic conditions." (p. 91)

Arguments regarding the appropriateness of ability grouping for gifted students go beyond a concern for providing the most effective instruction to discussions of the social climate of the classrooms. Essentially, the debate centers

on the relationship that gifted children have with other members of the class. Barbe (1965) states:

> "To the argument that the slower child is stimulated by the bright child, Goddard answered that the slower child is not stimulated but frightened. Instead of the special class making the gifted child feel superior, Carroll believes that it is the regular class where this happens and not the special class. He says that in an unselected group the gifted child is constantly made conscious of the fact that he is brighter than his classmates, so that different classes eliminate one of the causes of inflated self-esteem. Edith Carlson agrees with this view. She says that the 'smugness, feelings of superiority and other undesirable characteristics are alleviated when bright children are placed in special classes...'" (p. 430)

This kind of discussion has both an empirical base ("What is the effect of gifted students on low-achieving students?") and an ethical one ("Do gifted students have a responsibility to their more typical classmates?")

One of the major arguments advanced in favor of mainstreaming has been the salutory effects on achievement and behavior produced by exposing retarded students to greater intellectual stimulation and more appropriate role models than that provided in the special education class. In contrast, the role of the gifted student as "monitor" or "demonstrator" is generally considered to be inappropriate, a violation of the gifted student's right to an education. Cushenberry and Howell (1974) write:

> "This is a dubious practice in which the bright child is used to assist other students with questions or difficulties or to help the teacher with record keeping and similar tasks. The youngster is kept busy and other children may profit from the extrahelp provided, but it cheats the gifted one from developing his abilities and interests." (p. 481)

This discussion raises the issue of the appropriateness (both pedagogically and ethically) of using higher achieving students as role models and informal teachers of lower achieving students.

The issue of segregated v. integrated programs cannot be addressed without the recognition that there are substantial political and values questions involved. Focussing exclusively on issues of administrative ease or efficiency is likely to deflect attention from the underlying issues which must be resolved (or at least discussed) if there is to be concensus in this area.

What Kind of Teachers Do Gifted/Retarded Students Need?

The final area of mutual concern in discussions of how best to educate students identified as exceptional relates to who should teach those students. Support of segregated programs for the gifted inevitably leads to a discussion of who should teach such a segregated class, and how should that individual differ from teachers of "regular" classrooms of typical children. Educators of the gifted often state that "the attributes most frequently cited as appropriate for teachers of the gifted are the same attributes as those desirable for any good teacher," (Nelson and Cleland 1975 , p. 439); nonetheless, many of these same authors still go on to list desirable characteristics for teachers of the gifted. Cushenberry and Howell (1974) list the following as desirable traits: "1. Giftedness, 2. Imagination, 3. Superior Education, 4. Capacity to Organize and Plan, 5. Sense of Humor, 6. Humanism." (p. 52) With the exception of the first characteristic, "giftedness," the traits seem not very different from those characteristics demanded from all teachers. The inclusion of the characteristic of "giftedness" is generally explained as being necessary so that the teacher can relate successfully to the children and understand what they are going through.

Barbe and Frierson (1975) however, believe that there are fundamental differences in the kinds of teachers gifted children require. They describe the necessity

of "process-oriented teaching for the gifted" which can be discriminated from "product-oriented teaching for the average." (p. 438) Ward (1975) also supports the differentness of gifted teachers.

> "There can be no doubt that some teachers are better teachers for gifted children than others; just as some teachers are better fitted through training, temperament, experience and interest to teach retarded children." (p. 297),

and he goes on to state:

> "... It is difficult to see what is gained by assigning a teacher whose real forte is teaching the gifted to a retarded group one year and an average group the next." (p. 298)

Whitmore (1980) responds specifically to the two major questions often raised concerning teachers for gifted students. In response to the question, "Does a teacher have to be gifted in order to effectively teach gifted children?" she answers "Yes." She states that it is erroneous to assume that the same skills are needed for effective teaching of all kinds of learners and that gifted students need the role models of gifted adults. In response to the question, "Wouldn't all children benefit from a teacher who is so qualified and gifted?" Whitmore responds that they no doubt would, but that such teachers are increasingly rare, and that in order to continue to attract gifted teachers to the field of teaching we must offer them the opportunity and challenge of working with gifted students.

In the same way that support for segregated programs is based on some underlying assumptions concerning the nature of the regular classroom, arguments for the unique demands on teachers of gifted students are based on a conception of what the teacher of typical students does. Ward (1975) for example, states that gifted teachers need additional preparation time:

> "Effective teaching of gifted children is a demanding task, more so than teaching average children whose range of interests is narrower and for whom drastic departures from standard curriculum and teaching methods already reasonably well developed need not be made." (p. 298)

It is extremely difficult to imagine any teacher who feels that he/she has enough planning time or whose teaching would not improve with the same. The notion of process-oriented teaching (as opposed to product-oriented teaching) as only appropriate to gifted students is also highly questionable. The effect of discussing teachers of the gifted as if they were somehow a breed apart has direct parallels in the history of the education of retarded students. The arguments that "it takes a special person to work with those children" has for a long time decreased the probability that regular education teachers would undertake to work with students characterized as "retarded."

By emphasizing how differentthese children are and how different their teachers must be, one can see why segregated programs would seem to be called for in order to match "the right teacher" with these unusual children.

Discussions of the special teachers required by gifted students raises yet another issue. Given a shortage of really excellent teachers, to whom should they be assigned -- to low-achieving students desperately in need of the best teaching available -- or to highly-achieving students who need increased stimulation to reach unpredictable heights of accomplishment? Whitmore's (1980) notion that gifted teachers would only find satisfaction in working with gifted students would be, no doubt questioned by many highly skilled successful teachers of severely handicapped students. This question goes beyond one of administrative management as it approaches the values issues raised by the competition for limited resources between disadvantaged and highly advantaged segments of society.

Conceptualizing Difference

The way in which retardation and giftedness are conceptualized will have a prominent effect on how we view both the relationship between them and the relationship between retarded and gifted individuals and typical individuals.

There are two basic ways in which the groups can be compared:

retarded R: non-retarded $\approx$ gifted: non-gifted

or

retarded: non-retarded $\approx$ non-gifted: gifted

R: non-R $\approx$ G: non-G

If we see retarded students as being related to non-retarded students in the same way that gifted students are related to non-gifted students, it is logical to conceive of both groups as being "deviants" whose behavior differs from those who constitute the "norm." If this is how we conceptualize differences, then the following statements can be made relative to both groups:

1. Students whose academic abilities differ widely from the norm need differentiated special education appropriate to their level.

2. It is important to avoid stereotyping members of the deviant group on the basis of a simple characteristic (for example, I.Q.), and to beware of issues of stigma and self-fulfilling prophecy.

3. It is important to recognize that those members of a class not labeled as different are still a heterogeneous group and to avoid false assumptions concerning the sameness of un-labeled children.

4. It is important for members of the deviant group to interact with "the norm" on a regular basis in order to avoid stereotyping, stigma and feelings of superiority and/or inferiority.

5. It is important for members of "the norm" to interact on a regular basis with members of the deviant group in order to develop tolerance and understanding for individuals who are different.

R: non-R ≿ non-G: G

If we see retarded students as being related to non-retarded students in the same way that non-gifted students are related to gifted students, then the relationship is between those with less advanced skills or abilities and those with more advanced skills or abilities. If this is how the differences are conceived then the following statements can be made relative to both groups.

1. Achievement differences can best be described as resting along a continuum; arbitrary labels, or distinctions between students on the basis of one feature of their behavior are thus inappropriate. Similarly, it is fallacious to conceive of an "average" group if achievement is evaluated along a continuum rather than by categories.

2. Achievement differences between students can best be addressed by providing highly individualized educational services appropriate to the specific needs of each student.

3. Lower-achieving and higher-achieving students should have opportunities to work together and learn from one another as part of their educational program. It is reasonable to expect higher-achieving students to share their skills with lower-achieving students and to serve as models for those students. That is, in the same way the "retarded" need the "non-retarded" as models, so do the "non-gifted" need the "gifted."

4. It is important for members of both ends of the continuum to interact on a regular basis with the whole spectrum of other students in order that they realize that distinctions which are drawn between them are uni-dimensional and that there is much they have in common. "Non-retarded" need to develop tolerance and understanding for the "retarded" and the "gifted" need to develop tolerance and understanding for the "non-gifted."

Conclusion and Recommendations

An examination and comparison of the handicapped education movement and the gifted education movement reveals both some commonalities of concern and raises some fundamental issues which must be addressed before there could be harmony rather than antipathy between the two forces.

Common Concerns

1. Problems arise for both populations with provision of token services. Gifted education programs which consist of one hour a week of enrichment activities while leaving untouched the regular classroom in which the student spends most of his/her time are clearly unsatifactory. Similarly, pull-out programs for retarded students have been criticized for failing to alter the deviance-creating climate of the regular classroom which often makes students deviant by narrow and inflexible conceptions of curriculum and learning.
2. For both populations, there is a need for truly differentiated services on the basis of need. Merely assigning students labeled as "retarded" to the EMR Room or students identified as "gifted" to the special gifted class cannot possibly address the individual needs of these students. The tendency to see labels and categories rather than individuals is a significant problem for both groups.
3. There is a clear need for the provision of a continuum of services depending on individual needs. Deno's (1970) Cascade

Model designates a whole range of service delivery models which may be necessary to adequately serve students identified as handicapped. Certain aspects of the Cascade Model would be appropriate with regard to gifted students as well. The Enrichment Triad Model (Schlichter 1981; Renzulli 1977) which provides a differentiated set of enrichment activities for all kids approximates this concept as does the Revolving Door Identification Programming Model (Delisle, Reis, & Gubbins 1981; Renzulli and Smith 1980).

4. Mainstreaming cannot simply mean dumping students into the regular classroom (or simply leaving them there) for either population. Whitmore (1980) says that the regular classroom may not be the "least restrictive environment" for gifted students unless certain minimal conditions are met. These minimal conditions taken at face value, represent not only those necessary for gifted children but those necessary for all children and they include the valuing of diversity and the prizing of individuality. Fox (1979) states:

> "Present research suggests that administrative practices such as grade skipping on the provision of accelerated classes offer more direct service to the gifted learner than 'mainstreaming' in heterogeneous classes. Unfortunately, at present many teachers are expected to provide for the gifted student without the aid of tutors or other facilities." (p. 122)

It is not surprising that most regular teachers cannot adequately meet the needs of either retarded or gifted learners within the regular classroom. A

reconceptualization of the regular classroom, however, would allow teachers to meet the needs of all students. Some of the changes which would be necessitated would include:

1. Smaller class sizes;
2. More flexible curricula;
3. More adequate teacher training; and
4. A different teacher response to heterogeneity and diversity.

Further Questions

Chief among those issues which must be addressed before there could be any merger of the two educational movements relates to the purpose of schooling. If academic achievement is valued exclusively, then there is little reason to be concerned about the social climate of schools or the interaction between students which takes place therein. Drews (1971) states that one of the outcomes valued for the gifted is the "development of social conscience and engagement in pro-social action" (p. 117). If this is so, then it does not seem unreasonable to suggest that gifted students might legitimately take some responsibility for enriching the learning of their non-gifted peers. While concerns about the abuse of gifted students as workhorses or paper-graders are extremely valid, perhaps the development of a "social conscience" can begin for the gifted within a heterogeneous school population.

Another issue rarely addressed directly concerns the effects of strong thrusts towards gifted education on the education of other students. If coalitions are ever to be possible between proponents of gifted education and other educators and between parents of gifted children and parents of all other children, the following question must be answered: "Do proponents of segregated

gifted programs support this concept for its inherent value or because they feel that this is the only viable alternative given the current status of public schools and the generally unsatisfactory nature of teaching in "regular" classrooms. If the latter, rather than the former, is the case, then the possibilities for merging the concerns of parents of gifted children with those of parents in general are substantially increased, and the potential power of such a coalition is considerable. If, on the other hand, proponents of segregated gifted education programs feel that these are inherently the only or best solution, then such programs seem doomed to eternal political struggle with competing claims for time, money, and resources.

Five of the arguments raised in support of gifted education must be examined in terms of their underlying assumptions and their implications for the "other 95%" (Remley 1981).

1. <u>That the gifted are not achieving up to their full potential in our current school arrangements</u>.

   One needs to ask whether we can substantiate the claims that any student is, in fact, working up to his full potential. In other words, couldn't every student be doing better in school given better teachers and more resources?

2. <u>That the gifted are a discrete group, different from the "average" and therefore requiring special treatment</u>.

   There is a need to question the conception of averageness, per se, to explore the problems of viewing a clearly heterogeneous group as "the gifted," and to ask, "Does anyone deserve <u>average</u> treatment when average means mediocre and undifferentiated?"

3. That only the gifted will benefit from the special kinds of education which are provided for them.

   There is a need to ask whether "average" students would not also benefit from creativity training, mentors, apprenticeships, and other special opportunities provided for gifted students.

4. That the self-concept of gifted children will be improved by separating them.

   Again, one must question the self-concepts of children labeled, de facto, as "non-gifted" and the subsequent effects of their self-concept and performance.

5. That ear-marking funds for gifted programs will strengthen schools in general.

   Does such compartmentalization of funds, and the channeling of the energies of such a vocal group of parents into specific programs, remove pressures from the schools to attend to the needs of the "other 95%"?

Unless the above issues can be brought to public attention and examined broadly, the risks to the over-all educational systems in this country are immense. Bettelheim warned in 1958 that, "The conflict takes on the ominous features of a battle in which one side fights for special opportunities for its own kind - the intelligent - and for equal opportunities for the rest of the population." (Cited in Remley 1981, p. 47) This concern is reiterated by educator Vincent Rogers, who states:

> "The United States is headed toward the provision of two curriculums, a narrow rigid curriculum for most children and a broader, richer one for gifted kids. There's nothing inherently wrong with recognizing talent, but if it's

> done at the expense of other kids, it's wrong and elitist. To provide - as gifted programs do - all kinds of apparatus, low pupil-teacher ratio, field trips - it's beautiful for these kids. But the rest are left doing workbooks. Sure the gifted children profit from it. But not any more than other groups of children would." (Cited in Remley 1981, p. 47)

There are two possible outcomes from the thrust towards gifted education in this country. One is described above as the creation of a dual system which Rogers warns about, which appeases the parents of the gifted children but leaves untouched the underlying educational structure. The other possibility is to use the gifted education movement as a catalyst for examining what is deficient about our current educational system and to create schools which address the needs of gifted children as part of an overall thrust towards individualization and the valuing of diversity. The futures of all children depend on seeing the full political implications of any educational decision which attends to the exclusive needs of only a small segment of learners.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Barbe, W.B. "Homogeneous grouping for gifted children" in W.B. Barbe (editor), Psychology and Education of the Gifted: Selected Readings. N.Y.: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1965, pp. 426-431.

Barbe, W.B. and Frierson, E.C. "Teaching the gifted: a new frame of reference" in W.B. Barbe and J.S. Renzulli (editors), Psychology and Education of the Gifted. N.Y.: John Wiley and Sons, 1972.

Bereday, G.Z.F. "Opposition to education of the gifted in the United States" in W.B. Barbe (editor), Psychology and Education of the Gifted: Selected Readings. N.Y.: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1965, pp. 473-487.

Blatt, B. In and Out of Mental Retardation. Baltimore: University Park Press, 1981.

Cushenberry, D.C. and Howell, H. Reading and the Gifted Child. Springfield, Ill: Charles C. Thomas, 1974.

Delisle, J.R., Reis, S.M. and Gubbins, E.J. "The revolving door identification and programming model." Exceptional Children, Vol. 48, No. 2, October 1981, pp. 152-156.

Dellas, M. and Galer, E.L. "Identification of creativity: the individual." Psychology Bulletin, Vol. 73, No. 1, 1973, pp. 55-73.

Deno, E. "Special education as developmental capital." Exceptional Children, November 1970, pp. 229-237.

Drews, E.M. "Beyond curriculum" in J.C. Gowan and E.P. Torrance (editors), Educating the Ablest. Itasca, Ill.: F.E. Peacock Publishers, 1971.

Dunn, L.M. "Special education for the mildly retarded - is much of it justifiable?" Exceptional Children, September 1968, pp. 5-22.

Esposito, D. "Homogeneous and heterogeneous ability groupings: principal findings and implications for evaluating and designing more effective educational environments." Review of Educational Research, Spring 1973, pp. 163-179.

Feldman, D. "Toward a non-elitist conception of giftedness." Phi Delta Kappan, Vol. 60, No. 9, May 1979.

Fox, L.H. "Programs for the gifted and talented: an overview" in A.H. Pessow (editor), The Gifted and Talented: Their Education and Development. The 78th Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979.

Gardner, J.W. Excellence: Can We Be Equal and Excellent Too? N.Y.: Harper and Row, 1961.

Getzels, J.W. and Jackson, P.W. "The meaning of 'giftedness' - an examination of an expanding concept." Phi Delta Kappan, Vol. 40, No. 2, November 1958, pp. 75-77.

Glass, G. and Smith, M. "Meta-analysis of research on class size and achievement." Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1979, pp. 2-16.

Gottlieb, J. "Mainstreaming: fulfilling the promise." Journal of Mental Deficiency, Vol. 86, No. 2, September 1981.

Hobbs, N. Issues in the Classification of Children. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc., 1975.

Johnson, D.W. and Johnson, R. "Cooperative, competitive and individualistic learning." Journal of Research and Development in Education, Vol. 12, No. 1, 1978, pp. 3-15.

Johnson, D.W., Skon, L. and Johnson, R. "Effects of cooperative, competitive and individualistic conditions on children's problem-solving performance." American Educational Research Journal, Vol. 17, No. 1, Spring 1980, pp. 83-93.

Johnson, G.O. "Special education for mentally handicapped - a paradox." Exceptional Children, Vol. 19, 1962, pp. 62-69.

Larry P. v Wilson Riles, NOC-71-2270 RFP, U.S. District Court, Northern District of California (June 21, 1972).

MacKinnon, D.W. "The nature and nurture of creative talents." American Psychologist, Vol. 17, 1962, pp. 484-495.

Marland, S.P. Education of the Gifted and Talented: Report to the Congress of the United States by the U.S. Commissioner of Education and Background Papers. Submitted to the U.S. Office of Education. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1971.

Mercer, J.R. Labeling the Mentally Retarded. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973.

Mills v D.C. Board of Education, 348 F. SUPP. 866 (D.D.C. 1972).

Nelson, J.B. and Cleland, D.L. "The role of the teacher of gifted and creative children" in W.B. Barbe and J.S. Renzulli (editors), Psychology and Education of the Gifted. N.Y.: John Wiley and Sons, 1975.

PARC v Commonwealth, 334 F. SUPP. 1257 (E.D. Pa. 1971) and 343 F. SUPP. 279 (E.D. Pa. 1972).

Remley, A.G. "All the best for the brightest." The Progressive, Vol. 45, No. 5, May 1981.

Renzulli, J.S. The Enrichment Triad Model: A Guide for Developing Defensible Programs for the Gifted and Talented. Wethersfield, Ct.: Creative Learning Press, 1977.

Renzulli, J.S. "What makes giftedness? Reexamining a definition." Phi Delta Kappan, November 1978.

Renzulli, J.S. and Smith, L.H. "Revolving door: a truer turn for the gifted." Learning, October 1980, pp. 91-93.

Schlichter, C.L. "The multiple talent approach in mainstream and gifted programs." Exceptional Children, Vol. 48, No. 2, October 1981, pp. 144-150.

Sharan, S. "Cooperative learning in small groups: recent methods and effects on achievement, attitudes and ethnic relations." Review of Educational Research, Vol. 50, No. 2, Summer 1980, pp. 241-272.

Slavin, R.E. "Cooperative learning." Review of Educational Research, Vol. 50, No. 2, Summer 1980, pp. 315-342.

Tannenbaum, A.J. "A backward and forward glance at the gifted." The National Elementary Principal, Vol. 51, No. 5, February 1972, pp. 14-23.

Tannenbaum, A.J. "Pre-Sputnik to post-Watergate concern about the gifted" in A.H. Pessow (editor), The Gifted and the Talented: Their Education and Development. The 78th Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979.

Terman, L.M. and Oden, M.H. "The gifted child grows up," Vol. IV of Genetic Studies of Genius, L.M. Terman (editor). Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1947.

Ward, V.S. "Basic concepts" in W.B. Barbe and J.S. Renzulli (editors), Psychology and Education of the Gifted. N.Y.: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1975, pp. 61-71.

Ward, V.S. "Program organization and implementation" in W.B. Barbe and J.S. Renzulli (editors), Psychology and Education of the Gifted. N.Y.: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1975, pp. 295-302.

Whitmore, J.R. Giftedness, Conflict and Underachievement. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1980.

Wilson, B.J. and Schmits, D.W. "What's new in ability grouping?" Phi Delta Kappan, April 1978, pp. 535-536.

Wolfensberger, W. The Principle of Normalization in Human Service. National Institute of Mental Retardation, 1972.